



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

ERITREA – Drought

Fact Sheet #5, Summary Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

October 10, 2003

This Fact Sheet updates USAID/OFDA Eritrea Fact Sheet #4 for fiscal year 2003, dated July 23, 2003.

Background

- In 2002, below-average *azmera* or minor season rains from March through May, severely hindered land preparation for the main planting season that extends from June through September. Additionally, insufficient and sporadic *kremti* or main season rains, seriously reduced crop production in the drought-prone Anseba, Northern Red Sea, and Southern Red Sea Zones, as well as the breadbasket zones of Gash Barka, Debub, and Maelkel. Drought conditions also resulted in substantial livestock losses among pastoral communities. In August 2002, the Government of the State of Eritrea’s (GSE) Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) issued an appeal to the humanitarian community for emergency assistance in response to the drought. The GSE reported food production deficits of nearly 300,000 metric tons (MT) and significant humanitarian needs in the health and water and sanitation sectors. According to the 2003 U.N. Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Eritrea, an estimated 1.4 million out of a total population of 3.3 million were affected by drought conditions in 2003. The United Nations (U.N.) identified an additional 910,000 vulnerable people, primarily HIV-infected individuals, demobilized soldiers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returned refugees, for assistance under the Consolidated Appeal.

Numbers at a Glance

Total Drought-Affected Population in 2003	1.4 million	Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal
Total Population in Need of Assistance in 2003	2.3 million	Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal
Total Food Aid Requirements in 2003	290,000 MT	Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal

Total USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) \$3,296,633
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date)..... \$71,215,707

Current Situation

- From August 23 to September 2, 2003, a U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) team of technical and regional specialists traveled to Eritrea to assess the water, sanitation, livestock, agriculture, health, and nutrition situation in Debub, Anseba, and Gash Barka Zones. The team concluded that emergency response activities and local coping mechanisms had stabilized the humanitarian crisis, although the situation remained precarious.
- In mid-August 2003, the Joint Technical Task Force of GSE ministries, U.N. agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), conducted an interim assessment of the humanitarian situation in Eritrea. The provisional harvest estimate of 210,000 MT of cereals was significantly higher than the 54,000 MT produced in 2002, but fell short of Eritrea’s needs of 612,000 MT. The interim crop assessment report estimates that Eritrea will produce an average level of cereals and pulses in 2003, mainly due to failure of *azmera* rains, affecting the performance of long-cycle crops that normally account for 20 percent of annual crop production. As a result, Eritrea may face another difficult humanitarian situation in 2003-2004.
- Under normal circumstances, USAID’s Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) estimates that 78 percent of the rural population lacks access to potable water. Poor rains during the past three years have failed to replenish most traditional water sources, exacerbating chronic shortages. While the current rains have increased the water supplies in many villages, the rains will need to continue for an extended period of time to replenish depleted water tables.
- While malnutrition rates remain high, USAID/OFDA field assessments found no critical health and nutrition emergency due to drought conditions. Instead, the team indicated that widespread poor health status and malnutrition reflected chronic problems due to lack of water and sanitation, general food insecurity, and limited access to primary and maternal health care. USAID/OFDA expects the overall health and nutrition condition to improve with the upcoming harvest.
- The USAID/OFDA assessment team reported that the onset of the rains in highland areas has improved livestock conditions. Early growth of grasses has already increased livestock weight. Prospects for the availability of graze and fodder for animals depend on consistent rains throughout September.

- On August 10, unidentified armed assailants attacked a vehicle belonging to USAID/OFDA implementing partner Mercy Corps, killing two humanitarian aid workers and seriously wounding a third. USAID/Eritrea temporarily suspended activities in the area to further assess the security environment.
- The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) indicates that a desert locust outbreak may occur in the eastern lowland areas of the country. Continued desert locust surveys in key breeding areas by the MOA is required for immediate intervention in case of outbreaks.
- According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 67,935 people remained displaced throughout Eritrea in FY 2003, due to drought conditions, the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances, and lack of infrastructural rehabilitation.

U.S. Government Response

- On December 2, 2002, U.S. Ambassador to Eritrea Donald J. McConnell declared a disaster in Eritrea due to food security concerns throughout the country and the significant loss of main season crops in western Eritrea.
- From August 23 to September 2, 2003, a USAID/OFDA team of technical and regional specialists traveled to drought-affected areas of Eritrea to assess the humanitarian situation, identify needs, and monitor programs. USAID/OFDA conducted a total of six assessments of drought-affected regions in FY 2003.
- In FY 2003, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$3.2 million to support emergency water and sanitation, food security, and livelihoods recovery activities in drought-affected areas.
- USAID/OFDA contributed approximately \$2.1 million in response to acute water shortages, benefiting approximately 155,963 people in Debub, Anseba, and Northern Red Sea Zones, through Concern Worldwide, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Mercy Corp, and the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF).
- USAID/OFDA provided approximately \$700,000 to support food security programs for more than 12,600 vulnerable families and 700 female-headed households in Gash Barka and Debub Zones through CARE.
- USAID/OFDA provided approximately \$500,000 for emergency agricultural and livestock recovery programs for an estimated 8,625 drought-affected households in Gash Barka and Debub Zones through CARE and CRS.
- In FY 2003, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) contributed approximately 154,420 MT of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance valued at approximately \$63.6 million through the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), Mercy Corps, and CRS. The emergency food assistance included wheat, blended cereal, beans, and vegetable oil. Despite the U.S. government response, WFP estimated a 50 percent shortfall of food assistance requirements in 2003. USAID/FFP plans to deploy a regional expert to Eritrea from October 28 to November 4, to assess the upcoming harvest and food distributions in order to determine food assistance needs for FY 2004.
- The Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (State/PRM) provided more than \$4.2 million in FY 2003 through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for refugee assistance and to CARE and International Medical Corps (IMC) for health and education programs in Eritrea.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ERITREA

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Amount</i>
FY 2003				
USAID/OFDA				\$3,296,633
	CARE	Food Security, Livelihoods Recovery	Gash Barka, Debub	\$932,204
	Concern Worldwide	Water/Sanitation	Debub	\$186,498
	CRS	Livelihoods Recovery	Gash Barka, Debub	\$737,131
	Mercy Corps	Water/Sanitation	Anseba, Northern Red Sea	\$184,800
	UNICEF	Water/Sanitation	Debub, Anseba	\$1,256,000
USAID/FFP				\$ 63,622,400
	WFP	77,200 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 33,056,500
	Mercy Corps	25,310 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 10,366,300
	CRS/IEOP	51,910 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 20,199,600
State/PRM				\$4,296,674
	UNHCR	Refugee Assistance	Countrywide	\$3,550,000
	CARE	Sexually Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Education	Countrywide	\$371,392

	IMC	Primary Health Care	Gash Barka	\$375,282
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003				\$66,919,033
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003				\$71,215,707

Public Donation Information

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their drought response efforts in Eritrea can be found at <http://www.interaction.org/eastafrica/index.html>. Information on other organizations responding may be available at www.reliefweb.org.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov -> “Disaster Assistance” -> “How Can I Help?”
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or 703-276-1914
 - InterAction: www.interaction.org -> “Guide to Appropriate Giving”

USAID/OFDA fact sheets can be obtained from the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html